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RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 0750
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/NAVCRIMINSERVFO FAREAST YOKOSUKA JA
RHMFISS/NAVCRIMINSERVRA OKINAWA JA
RUHBANB/OKINAWA AREA FLD OFC US FORCES JAPAN CAMP BUTLER JA
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 0304
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 0266
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0694
RHMFISS/USARPAC G5 FT SHAFTER HI
RHMFISS/USPACOM REP GUAM ISLAND GU
RUALBCC/YOKOTA AB HQ USFJ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NAHA 000021

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 1/30/2032

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SUBJECT: COURTESY CALL BY TOP US COMMANDING GENERAL IN OKINAWA ON
PREFECTURAL GOVERNOR A GOOD OMEN

CLASSIFIED BY: Kevin K. Maher, Consul General, U.S. Consulate
General Naha, U.S. Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The tone of the January 26 courtesy call by the senior US military official in Okinawa on the new governor of Okinawa Prefecture was warm and friendly. In a break from previous administrations, Governor Hirokazu NAKAIMA refrained from lecturing LtGen Joseph Weber on Okinawan history or reading a laundry list of complaints regarding the US military. Instead, Nakaima focused on ways the U.S. military might further contribute to the Okinawan economy. End Summary.

¶2. (U) On January 26 Lieutenant General Joseph R. Weber, commanding general of the III Marine Expeditionary Force and

Okinawa Area Coordinator, paid a courtesy call on Okinawa Prefecture Governor Hirokazu NAKAIMA. Nakaima, who took office just one month previously, thanked Weber for calling and said it was important for the US military and Okinawa Prefectural Government (OPG) to establish close, direct lines of communication. Weber agreed that direct, open communications were essential to working through and resolving problems, and building a healthy, trusting relationship. Nakaima requested the military continue to try to reduce incidents and accidents in order to minimize tension between local citizens and the US military. Weber replied he knew Nakaima had campaigned on a platform that included "zero incidents and accidents," and he was committed to that goal as well.

13. (U) Vice Governor Zenki NAKAZATO noted that OPG and US military leaders once had reciprocal house parties and golf outings, and Nakaima said he wanted to resume that tradition. Nakaima noted that during his tenure as chairman of the Okinawa Electric Power Company, he had played golf with Weber, and he would like to start doing that again. Nakaima also noted he intended to visit US Marine Corps facilities on January 30. Weber said he was pleased with Nakaima's planned visits, and he would be welcome anytime.

14. (U) Nakaima thanked Weber for Service members' volunteering for the English Language Assistance Program, an English as a second language program to help Okinawans develop practical English skills. He also mentioned his appreciation that Okinawa college students could attend on-base college classes, providing an opportunity similar to studying abroad, but at a much lower cost. Weber noted that the English language program was just one example of Service members' volunteer programs that helped build friendly relations with host communities.

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15. (U) Nakaima sought Weber's assistance on three economic/commercial issues. First, for local producers to have the opportunity to place more Okinawa products in military post/base exchanges and commissaries. Nakaima explained that sales within military facilities would generate profits as well as serve as test markets for potential exports to the United States. Weber said he would consider and research how to get more local products into the military shopping areas.

16. (U) Nakaima also asked Weber to assist in getting direct commercial flights between Okinawa and the United States, specifically Hawaii. Nakaima said he had been working indirectly with two airlines to convince them to offer such service. Weber noted there were reduced military air flights available for Service members in Okinawa, so he shared the governor's interest in establishing direct commercial flights between the United States and Okinawa. Finally, Nakaima asked Weber if he would think of other ways to assist in developing Okinawa's economy, and noted he had made the same request of Consul General Maher in a separate meeting. Weber agreed that developing the Okinawan economy was important, and to do what he could.

17. (C) USFJ Okinawa Area Field Office (OAF0) Comment: It was significant that Nakaima, unlike previous administrations, chose to avoid lecturing Weber and instead, expressed a desire to establish a closer relationship between OPG and the US military. Furthermore, he did this publicly, in the presence of the media. OAF0 received a copy of talking points prepared by OPG staff for Nakaima a few days before the courtesy call. Those talking points included what would have been standard for Nakaima's predecessor, Keiichi INAMINE. Before the courtesy call, OPG staff notified OAF0 that the governor had rejected the talking points and would have his own agenda, which was largely positive. Although it may still be too early to assess the climate and direction of the Nakaima administration, this meeting was encouraging and may indicate that the political environment on Okinawa is maturing and could result into a more positive, realistic relationship with the U.S. military. End OAF0 Comment.

18. (C) Comment: ConGen Naha concurs in OAFO comment. ConGen notes that Nakaima's January 30 visit to Marine Corps bases is an unprecedented and welcome OPG outreach, apparently directed at better understanding US military issues. End comment.

Participants:

OPG:

Okinawa Prefecture Governor Hirokazu Nakaima

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Okinawa Prefecture Vice Governor Zenki Nakazato

OPG Director General Yoritaka Hanashiro

USG:

III Marine Expeditionary Force Commanding General LtGen Joseph Weber

USFJ Okinawa Area Field Office Chief COL Mark Franklin

USFJ Okinawa Area Field Office Pol-Mil Liaison Hisae Freeman

MAHER